

HATE CRIMES

The Hate Crimes Statistics Act of 1990 was enacted on April 23rd 1990, requiring the Attorney General to collect data on crimes exhibiting racial, ethnic, religious, or sexual prejudice. It was not until September of 1994 that the Act was amended to include biased acts against those with either physical or mental disabilities. The 2003 Uniform Crime Report reveals that there were as many as 7,489 incidents, reported to the FBI in 2003, which were categorized as hate crimes. A small portion of these incidents (0.5%) was disability-related, while the majority of them were race-oriented (52.5%). Religion-oriented hate crimes were measured at 16.4%, and Ethnic hate crimes at 14.2%. Hate crimes based on Sexual Orientation were quoted at 16.4%, while Multiple-Bias incidents came to about 0.05%.

"Hate Crime" is the common term for federal and state Civil Rights Violations. Hate crimes include any crimes principally motivated by hatred of another because of race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, handicap status, or gender. *All hate crimes would still be crimes even if the bias motivation were absent*; therefore, each hate crime listed below is also tallied elsewhere in this report.

In 2004, eight incidents were reported in Cambridge that could be classified as "hate crimes". The following is a chronological synopsis of the events that were reported:

1. The first reported civil violation of the year involved ongoing harassment of a resident, who had received letters since mid-2002, referencing the victim with the use of a racial epithaph. No threats or injuries were reported.
2. In late April a family of African immigrants reported that for the past two years a group of youths had been harassing them, telling them to return to their country and making threats. Two of the youths pushed the victim on this occasion. No injuries were caused by the assault.
3. In mid-May an Arab organization received an e-mail making statements about the Iraq war and Arab immigrants deserving to be beheaded.
4. A resident received several threatening Anti-Semitic e-mails, in May. No attempts were made on the victim, but she was put in fear as the unknown suspect threatened to find her home.
5. In late August Anti-Islamic graffiti was discovered on the side of a commercial establishment in Kendall Square and it was cleaned up. One of the statements was threatening in nature, but was not directed at any individual.
6. As a result of a conflict over a parking space in late October, a suspect, who was later identified and apologized, made derogatory statements to an Asian American couple and threatened to damage their vehicle.
7. Early in November, a victim who had been having ongoing confrontations, precipitated by a neighbor, was referenced with an anti-black epitaph and was threatened.
8. At a local church, unknown suspects spray-painted the female symbol onto a Virgin Mary statue and placed a makeshift crown atop it. A statement regarding abortion was also scribed at the foot of the statue.

